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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-199870

AUGUST 15, 1980

Major General LaVern E. Weber
Chief, National Guard Bureau

Dear General Weber:

Subject: [Recruiting Management in the National Guard]
(FPCD-80-79)

We recently reviewed recruiting management in the National Guard at the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, Senate Armed Services Committee. We also reviewed recruiting management in the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force. The results are being addressed in separate reports to each of the service Secretaries and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

We are also preparing two reports to the Congress addressing (1) the recruiting decisionmaking processes in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the service headquarters (including the Air National Guard and the Army National Guard) and (2) the extent and causes of, and the potential for, correcting recruiter malpractice. At the same time, we are sending a summary of our work to the Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel.

In doing this review we visited the National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C., and the Virginia and Illinois National Guards. We reviewed pertinent records, interviewed management and recruiting officials, and observed the various organizational structures in operation.

We are pleased with the immediate response of your organization in providing detailed data concerning the National Guard's recruiting operations. During the course of our review of recruiting, such information proved to be of great value in improving our understanding of the various organizations, procedures, and systems used to operate the recruiting programs.

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On the basis of our limited review, we found that the Air National Guard appears to be selecting, training, and managing its recruiting force in a manner which will achieve its recruiting objectives. In contrast, our review of the Army National Guard (ARNG) reconfirmed our earlier findings (FPCD-79-58, July 1979, and FPCD-79-71, August 1979) that ARNG goal-setting practices may be detracting from the depth of the actual recruiting problem.

We also determined that:

- State ARNG practices may be hindering recruiting effectiveness.
- Recruiting management tools are not being fully utilized.
- Recruiting monitoring and evaluation can be improved.

GOAL-SETTING PRACTICES MAY DETRACT
FROM DEPTH OF RECRUITING PROBLEM

ARNG has an official policy that its units should develop their recruiting objectives on the basis of their ability to recruit personnel rather than on the manpower needed to reach desired peacetime manning levels.

We recognize that ARNG has lowered its overall recruiting objectives to reflect the recruiting inputs possible within the limited resources which have been allocated by the Department of the Army, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Congress. We question the appropriateness of this procedure because of a general tendency to lose sight of ARNG's actual recruiting needs and concentrate instead on a lower objective. For example, if State A actually needs 10,000 recruits but instead establishes a recruiting goal of 7,000, accomplishment of the 7,000 goal may illustrate good management of available resources but not achievement of the numbers necessary to staff the units in that State.

This policy has resulted in manning strength levels considerably below those authorized. As of late 1979, ARNG was about 80 percent of authorized strength. Nineteen of the 53 States and territories had less than 80 percent of their authorized strength. One of the States we visited had 9 of its 15 battalion level organizations at below 80-percent strength.

We recognize that ARNG cannot recruit greatly increased numbers unless additional resources are provided. We also recognize that limited funds and personnel may preclude providing these additional resources. However, we believe that the use of the actual objectives needed to reach peacetime manning and the related resources necessary to accomplish that goal should be the driving force in all recruiting management resourcing decisions. In this way, if reductions in recruiting goals and related resourcing levels are necessary, then they would be viewed in the proper context of providing less than adequate levels.

STATE PRACTICES MAY HINDER
RECRUITING EFFECTIVENESS

ARNG officials informed us that States use different criteria in developing their recruiting objectives and that the National Guard Bureau is unable to totally reconcile these differences in allocating recruiting resources to the States. This has resulted in some inequities and inefficiencies in managing recruiting operations. If ARNG Headquarters were to develop uniform criteria for the States to use in developing their recruiting objectives, our view is that management of recruiting would improve.

RECRUITING MANAGEMENT TOOLS
ARE NOT FULLY UTILIZED

We believe that the National Guard Bureau is not fully utilizing several tools in its management of recruiting operations. These tools are:

- Use of probation authority for individual units.
- Withdrawal of Federal recognition for subordinate units.
- Withdrawal of Federal recognition for units as a whole.

During fiscal year 1979, despite the availability of these tools, the National Guard Bureau placed only one-half of 1 percent of all ARNG units on probation. Furthermore, the ARNG Director made no use of his authority to withdraw Federal recognition from units.

We believe that some ARNG units--operating within the limits of current funding levels and policies--are not fully supporting their recruitment and retention programs and that

using the above-mentioned tools would prompt greater achievement of recruiting and retention goals. We recognize that ARNG Headquarters can apply these tools against units which are at 80 percent or below of their authorized manning, but some units above the 80-percent level may also not be fully supporting their recruiting programs. Within the limits possible, however, the National Guard Bureau's use of these tools would, in our view, contribute to a more successful recruiting program.

RECRUITING MONITORING AND
EVALUATION CAN BE IMPROVED

We found evidence that ARNG may not have accurate and necessary information to provide guidance to units, withdraw recognition of units performing unsatisfactorily, and allocate financial support to units. Furthermore, it appeared that, in the areas we examined, headquarters' officials did not attempt to correct inaccurate data to monitor States' progress toward achieving recruiting objectives.

Our examination of evaluations by the Inspector General of the Army indicated that they appeared to continue to focus on compliance with forms rather than problems in recruiting performance. In one State we visited, we found that the last Inspector General's evaluation, which was conducted in November 1979, included recruiting in its scope. The resulting report, however, addressed the recruiting problems only in broad terms.

We urge you to work with the Inspector General of the Army to insure that audits of recruiting operations include more detailed information. We also urge you to address the issue of inadequate data.

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We are pleased with the cooperation we received during our review from people in the various organizational levels associated with National Guard recruiting. We look forward to a continued cooperative working relationship in the future.

Sincerely yours,



H. L. Krieger
Director